

But I pulled away. "Oh, Billy! No! Please!" I heard myself sob. "I can't bear it. Not—not all at once. Not so *much*——"

"Little *miser*!" he muttered, and took my hands down to clasp behind his neck. "Am I *never* to be allowed anything——"

"But I thought——"

"How *could* you?" he whispered. "Haven't you *eyes*? . . . Dashing away from me like that, before I could get in a word! You spitfire! 'Don't speak to me,' at every turn! And that first time, I was only given a scrap of your hair to kiss!"

"S-sorry you don't like my hair——"

"Not like it?" He pressed his cheek to it. "Not all that lovely soft stuff that I always wanted to touch?—and mightn't—not even that time after it came loose in the water——"

"Looking *horrid*!"

—"and clung all down you! D'you know what I shall do to it, presently?"

I didn't speak; I shut my eyes against his shoulder, and sighed. . . . And I had once thought I was not the "falling-in-love-type" of girl! I had once called him "that frozen ogre!"

"I shall twist this hair of yours into a great rope of black silk," he said, "and haul you off by it to that cave! Only question is, how soon? Nancy! How soon?"